

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-1804

December 13, 2006

The Honorable Tom Coburn  
United States Senator  
172 Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Coburn:

Thank you for speaking with me early in the morning on December 9 about the bill that would authorize building of the Morganza to the Gulf levee and flood control system in southern Louisiana. As we discussed, this is a crucial hurricane protection project that had previously been authorized. This flood control system would provide a series of levees, locks and other systems that would protect the 120,000 people who live in the 1,700 square miles from storm surges from hurricanes in the Gulf, primarily in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes.

As you know, I am extremely disappointed that you refused to lift your hold on H.R. 6428, the legislation that was pending passage in the Senate on Saturday morning. I was also puzzled by the reason your spokesman provided to the press for your continued objection. According to your spokesman, it is your position that "Congress needs to do a better job of keeping the promises we've already made to the region before we make new promises and commitments."

I agree 100% that Congress must keep the promises already made to the region-- which is just the point. In 2000, Congress authorized the Morganza to the Gulf project and effectively made a promise to the people of the region that it would be built at a 65/35 cost share. Because of bureaucratic delays on the part of the Army Corps of Engineers, that promise has not been kept and the project was included in the Water Resources Development Act of 2006 precisely to keep that promise. As a result of your objections, Congress is not, in fact, "keeping the promises" it has made to the region -- it is breaking them.

The key point here is that the Morganza to the Gulf flood control project is the only project in the WRDA bill that had already won authorization from Congress. It was on this basis that members of the Louisiana House and Senate delegation felt justified moving forward with legislation to authorize this project at the end of the session when it became apparent that WRDA was not going to pass.

I intend to work with our colleagues to push legislation through the 110<sup>th</sup> Congress that will reauthorize this project and allow the Army Corps of Engineers to finally move forward on it.

I look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss your specific concerns about the project. I admire your tenacity to eliminate unnecessary, unwarranted, and unwise government spending. However, this project does not fall in any of the above categories.

With warmest regards, I am

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Mary L. Landrieu", written in a cursive style.

Mary L. Landrieu  
United States Senator

MLL:hjg